

MAYORAL MINUTE

(ITEM MM26/21) BURWOOD BOUNCE BACK BUSINESS SUPPORT PACKAGE

File No: 21/44212

MAYORAL MINUTE BY CR JOHN FAKER (MAYOR)

Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on communities, businesses and the economy. While Council has responded swiftly to the crisis, the impact of the current lockdown continues to be felt.

In addition to the current stay at home order, increased restrictions imposed on hotspot local government areas has further impacted commercial and retail trade in Burwood, with many businesses depending on the ability to reactivate over the next few months in order to remain afloat.

In preparation for the easing of restrictions and reactivation of key industries, Council has developed a support package designed to help businesses bounce back after the extended lockdown period.

The ability for the hospitality sector to reopen and for residents to be able to frequent restaurants, cafes, bars and licensed premises, will be contingent upon the creation of expanded COVID-safe options for outdoor dining as well as Council's ability to streamline and fast-track application and approval processes. Similarly, enabling the use of outdoor spaces for live music and performance will be critical to the sectors economic recovery.

With an immediate focus on getting the hospitality and entertainment industry back on track it is anticipated that the measures outlined in this support package will commence in late October 2021, when lockdown restrictions are projected to be lifted, and continue until 31 January 2022.

Operational Plan Objective

- 1.1.1 Provide a diverse range of strategies and initiatives that meet the needs of the community
- 1.2 A well informed, supported and engaged community
- 5.2 Supported and engaged local businesses

I therefore move that:

1. Council prepare an interim COVID-19 Alfresco Dining and Live Performance Activation Policy to facilitate temporary outdoor dining and entertainment opportunities up to 31 January 2022. The proposed changes and any approvals will be time limited up to that date, after which businesses will need to go through the standard processes unless otherwise extended.
2. The draft policy includes the following temporary uses of public spaces until 31 January 2022:
 - a. Use of Council car parks, parks and nearby main streets for outdoor dining and live performance, subject to feasibility and safety assessment;
 - b. Temporary closure of laneways, main streets or adjoining side streets by Council to create space for safe outdoor dining and live performance with required traffic management and applications undertaken by Council;
 - c. Use of parking spaces in front of premises for outdoor dining and live performance;
 - d. Streamlined and fast-tracked outdoor dining approval processes for businesses;

- e. Opportunities for later business trading where appropriate.
3. That Council identify and complete the approval process for temporary outdoor dining and live performance for new areas to simplify and accelerate the process.
4. Council develop a new Small Business Grant program targeted at supporting and expanding opportunities for outdoor dining and entertainment.
5. Council establish a Business Recovery Taskforce to provide local leadership in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The taskforce, made up of diverse local industry representatives, will provide a forum for collaboration and new ideas. Participants will also direct and facilitate the delivery of support measures in response to the pandemic.
6. Council appeal to the NSW Government for funding to support the launch of the 'Burwood After Dark' pilot laneway activation program in an effort to enhance Burwood's night time economy and activate streets as shared spaces.
7. Council encourage and promote opportunities for busking and engage with local performers and schools to support the creative arts/ entertainment industry and invigorate streets.
8. Council provide the following financial relief to support communities and businesses impacted by COVID-19:
 - a. Where relevant, rental reduction for 6 months from 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021 for commercial tenants of Council properties, with reduction to be assessed by staff and approved by General Manager and Mayor.
 - b. Waive all fees and charges relating to new and existing outdoor dining licenses from 1 July 2021 to 31 January 2022.
 - c. 50% discount of fees and charges for the hire and use of the Community Hub, Fitzroy Centre and Woodstock Centre to 31 December 2021.
 - d. Process all creditors' invoices on a weekly basis

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.